IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-34 (Cancelled).

Claim 35 (New): An isolated polynucleotide which encodes a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 36 (New): A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 35.

Claim 37 (New): A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 35.

Claim 38 (New): The host cell of Claim 37, which is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 39 (New): The host cell of Claim 37, wherein said host cell is selected from the group consisting of *Corynebacterium glutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoglutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoacidophilum, Corynebacterium melassecola, Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes, Brevibacterium flavum, Brevibacterium lactofermentum,* and *Brevibacterium divaricatum.*

Claim 40 (New): An isolated polynucleotide, which comprises SEQ ID NO:1.

Claim 41 (New): A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 40.

Claim 42 (New): A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 40.

Claim 43 (New): The host cell of Claim 42, which is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 44 (New): The host cell of Claim 42, wherein said host cell is selected from the group consisting of *Corynebacterium glutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoglutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoacidophilum, Corynebacterium melassecola, Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes, Brevibacterium flavum, Brevibacterium lactofermentum,* and *Brevibacterium divaricatum.*

Claim 45 (New): An isolated polynucleotide, which hybridizes under stringent conditions to a polynucleotide comprising SEQ ID NO:1 or the complement thereof; wherein said stringent conditions comprise washing in 0.5 X SSC at a temperature of 68°C and which encodes a protein which has homocysteine methyltransferase activity.

Claim 46 (New): A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 45.

Claim 47 (New): A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 45.

Claim 48 (New): The host cell of Claim 47, which is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 49 (New): The host cell of Claim 47, wherein said host cell is selected from the group consisting of *Corynebacterium glutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoglutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoacidophilum, Corynebacterium melassecola, Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes, Brevibacterium flavum, Brevibacterium lactofermentum,* and *Brevibacterium divaricatum*.

Claim 50 (New): An isolated polynucleotide which is at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide comprising SEQ ID NO:1 and which encodes a protein having homocysteine methyltransferase activity.

Claim 51 (New): The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 50, which is at least 95 % identical to the polynucleotide comprising SEQ ID NO:1.

Claim 52 (New): A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claims 50 or 51.

Claim 53 (New): A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claims 50 or 51.

Claim 54 (New): The host cell of Claim 53, which is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 55 (New): The host cell of Claim 53, wherein said host cell is selected from the group consisting of *Corynebacterium glutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoglutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoacidophilum, Corynebacterium melassecola, Corynebacterium*

thermoaminogenes, Brevibacterium flavum, Brevibacterium lactofermentum, and *Brevibacterium divaricatum.*

Claim 56 (Withdrawn): A process for producing an L-amino acid, comprising culturing the host cell of Claim 37 in a medium suitable for producing the L-amino acid; and collecting the L-amino acid produced, wherein the isolated polynucleotide is overexpressed in said host cell.

Claim 57 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 56, wherein the L-amino acid is L-methionine.

Claim 58 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 56, wherein said host cell is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 59 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 56, wherein the host cell further comprises at least one overexpressed gene selected from the group consisting of the lysC gene which codes for a feed back resistant aspartate kinase,the gap gene which codes for glycerolaldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase, the pgk gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase, the pyc gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase, the tpi gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase, the metA gene which codes for homoserine O-acetyltransferase, the metB gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-synthase, the aecD gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-lyase, the glyA gene which codes for serine hydroxymethyltransferase, and the metY gene which codes for O-acetylhomoserine-sulfhydrylase.

Claim 60 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 56, wherein the host cell comprises expression of at least one gene whose expression is reduced relative to expression in a wildtype host cell, wherein the at least one gene is selected from the group consisting of the thrB gene which codes for homoserine kinase, the ilvA gene which codes for threonine dehydratase, the thrC gene which codes for threonine synthase, the ddh gene which codes for meso-diaminopimelate D-dehydrogenase, the pck gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase, the pgi gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase, and the poxB gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase.

Claim 61 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 56, further comprising concentrating the L-amino acid in the medium; removing an amount of 0 to 100 wt.% of the biomass formed during the culturing from the medium; and drying the L-amino acid collected.

Claim 62 (Withdrawn): A process for producing an L-amino acid, comprising culturing the host cell of Claim 42 in a medium suitable for producing the L-amino acid; and collecting the L-amino acid produced, wherein the isolated polynucleotide is overexpressed in said host cell.

Claim 63 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 62, wherein the L-amino acid is L-methionine.

Claim 64 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 62, wherein said host cell is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 65 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 62, wherein the host cell further comprises at least one overexpressed gene selected from the group consisting of the lysC gene which codes for a feed back resistant aspartate kinase,the gap gene which codes for glycerolaldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase, the pgk gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase, the pyc gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase, the tpi gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase, the metA gene which codes for homoserine O-acetyltransferase, the metB gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-synthase, the aecD gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-lyase, the glyA gene which codes for serine hydroxymethyltransferase, and the metY gene which codes for O-acetylhomoserine-sulfhydrylase.

Claim 66 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 62, wherein the host cell comprises expression of at least one gene whose expression is reduced relative to expression in a wildtype host cell, wherein the at least one gene is selected from the group consisting of the thrB gene which codes for homoserine kinase, the ilvA gene which codes for threonine dehydratase, the thrC gene which codes for threonine synthase, the ddh gene which codes for meso-diaminopimelate D-dehydrogenase, the pck gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase, the pgi gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase, and the poxB gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase.

Claim 67 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 62, further comprising concentrating the L-amino acid in the medium; removing an amount of 0 to 100 wt.% of the biomass formed during the culturing from the medium; and drying the L-amino acid collected.

Claim 68 (Withdrawn): A process for producing an L-amino acid, comprising culturing the host cell of Claim 47 in a medium suitable for producing the L-amino acid; and

collecting the L-amino acid produced, wherein the isolated polynucleotide is overexpressed in said host cell.

Claim 69 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 68, wherein the L-amino acid is L-methionine.

Claim 70 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 68, wherein said host cell is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 71 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 68, wherein the host cell further comprises at least one overexpressed gene selected from the group consisting of the lysC gene which codes for a feed back resistant aspartate kinase,the gap gene which codes for glycerolaldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase, the pgk gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase, the pyc gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase, the tpi gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase, the metA gene which codes for homoserine O-acetyltransferase, the metB gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-synthase, the aecD gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-lyase, the glyA gene which codes for serine hydroxymethyltransferase, and the metY gene which codes for O-acetylhomoserine-sulfhydrylase.

Claim 72 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 68, wherein the host cell comprises expression of at least one gene whose expression is reduced relative to expression in a wildtype host cell, wherein the at least one gene is selected from the group consisting of the thrB gene which codes for homoserine kinase, the ilvA gene which codes for threonine dehydratase, the thrC gene which codes for threonine synthase, the ddh gene which codes for meso-diaminopimelate D-dehydrogenase, the pck gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase, the pgi gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase, and the poxB gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase.

Claim 73 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 68, further comprising concentrating the L-amino acid in the medium; removing an amount of 0 to 100 wt.% of the biomass formed during the culturing from the medium; and drying the L-amino acid collected.

Claim 74 (Withdrawn): A process for producing an L-amino acid, comprising culturing the host cell of Claim 53 in a medium suitable for producing the L-amino acid; and collecting the L-amino acid produced, wherein the isolated polynucleotide is overexpressed in said host cell.

Claim 75 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 74, wherein the L-amino acid is L-methionine.

Claim 76 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 74, wherein said host cell is a coryneform bacterium.

Claim 77 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 74, wherein the host cell further comprises at least one overexpressed gene selected from the group consisting of the lysC gene which codes for a feed back resistant aspartate kinase,the gap gene which codes for glycerolaldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase, the pgk gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase, the pyc gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase, the tpi gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase, the metA gene which codes for homoserine O-acetyltransferase, the metB gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-synthase, the aecD gene which codes for cystathionine gamma-lyase, the glyA gene which codes for serine hydroxymethyltransferase, and the metY gene which codes for O-acetylhomoserine-sulfhydrylase.

Claim 78 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 74, wherein the host cell comprises expression of at least one gene whose expression is reduced relative to expression in a wildtype host cell, wherein the at least one gene is selected from the group consisting of the thrB gene which codes for homoserine kinase, the ilvA gene which codes for threonine dehydratase, the thrC gene which codes for threonine synthase, the ddh gene which codes for meso-diaminopimelate D-dehydrogenase, the pck gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase, the pgi gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase, and the poxB gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase.

Claim 79 (Withdrawn): The process of Claim 74, further comprising concentrating the L-amino acid in the medium; removing an amount of 0 to 100 wt.% of the biomass formed during the culturing from the medium; and drying the L-amino acid collected.

Claim 80 (New): Escherichia coli strain DSM 14354.

Claim 81 (New): A polynucleotide consisting of at least 100 consecutive nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1.